

Marc Herbst

## It's midnight

First things first, lets get this straight.

There are no art workers, only workers.

In this time of multitudes, when capital can't identify a class of labor worth a living wage, and most importantly because resistance and tomorrow will be won when *we* make connections, not difference, among labor. At *first glance*, to identify the artist as a separate class from general labor is *not good, it's a part of the problem*. The instinct of this essay is towards the further generalization of dissent, not the specifics of professional labor disputes. On second glance, it is extremely useful to recognize professional interests of a specific group of workers... but I'm not doing that, here.

Look, the root problem facing creative labor is the same as that which faces most everything else on this beautiful blue spinning planet- the fact that our existence is not deemed worth spit by those accountants of spit. Second; our real labor is considered worthless. Third, there are thousands of others waiting in the wings who could and would gladly do similar work at less pay, motivated by the same things that allow the current system to so exploit us. We call this problem capitalism.

There is no special class of workers. There are no artists, and there exists no special class among art workers who are owed any more or any less than anyone else; not that woman painter, not a Foxconn worker, a baker in Brazil or your chump real estate-developer cousin. The notion that there exists a family of select artists to whom attention is more worthy, is, at first blush is ridiculous. Equally backward is any notion that there is a family of cultural workers whose theorizing of their personal insults is any more meaningful - because this is the common experience *not* of a few political artists but of the whole mass of humanity from the beginning of time.

Equally retrograde, on first glance, is the notion that any one's creative output is more worthy- equally retrograde on any glance thereafter is the notion that someone's labor is more worthy because some Jake selected their thing to be displayed, somewhere.

The only silence to be broken is this... "we been robbed."

Its midnight or one in the morning, and we've been up all day working in the sugar warehouse though instead of going to our apartments to sleep, its playtime. In the socialisms that I positively experience, there are no professions, only tasks. All the stuff gets sold off the farm anyway, so the jobs mean nothing but another way to do. We got no private property, no proper money and so under the quarter moon and the eucalyptus we're howling. We're running behind the houses where your sleeping and on the poured concrete patio in front of the community house; we're only going to sleep when we fall flat on our faces.

On first glance, where we should look to are the margins. Always the margins. Folks in far away places holding it down by attending and hosting stuff we know nothing about and will never know of but they love. Far away is 1000's of miles from the octopus lens world. Far away is in Belarus or when we were 16 and had no access to mediating forces. And then far away it means when we were 16 and were never going to sell out. And selling out didn't mean telling the art press how legit your politics are, it means not talking to them (they were clearly "them")- because punk rock. Actually, these people exist everywhere and are not punkers, not teenagers, not professional artists. They are not now your potential viewers, readers, audience, material, fans etc.

Now, take another look.

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If you don't let stool pigeons break you up,  
If you don't let vigilantes break you up,  
And if you don't let race hatred break you up -  
You'll win. What I mean,  
Take it easy - but take it!

Pete Seeger- Talking Union Blues

(footnotes.

1. Different economic and political systems have happened and continue to happen throughout history.
2. In writing, I tried but failed to insert pertinent IWW quotes throughout. Check out the Little Red Songbook's "Solidarity for Ever"